

**Speech by VADM Ray Griggs, AO, CSC, RAN**  
**Chief of Navy Change of Command Ceremony**

**30 June 2014**

Senator Zed Seselja, representing the Minister for Defence, The Honourable David Feeney, Shadow Assistant Minister for Defence, Ms Gai Brodtmann, Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, CDF, Secretary, Senior ADF and Defence leaders, distinguished guests, men and women of the RAN, ladies and gentlemen.

Can I start by acknowledging the Ngunnawal people, the traditional owners of the land upon which we meet today and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I also want to acknowledge the contribution made to the RAN by indigenous Australians in over a century of service. I am particularly pleased that some of the members of 'Bungaree' could be here today to play a very special part in this ceremony.

When I assumed command just over three years ago I said there were three priorities: to restore our contract with Government, to prepare for the introduction of new capabilities, and to continue our reform and cultural change journey. Those three priorities have remained relevant throughout my time in command, indeed a number of aspects of the work we had in front of us were always going to be more than three year projects. Through the efforts of the whole Navy team we have, I believe, taken Navy forward, and while not free of challenges, I think we are better positioned for those that lie ahead.

For most of us here today our role is a grinding one, working away to enable those at sea to be able to fight and win. The considerable operational successes that we have enjoyed in the last three years are due to that important foundational and supporting work undertaken by uniformed and civilian people across the Navy and more broadly across Defence as much as they are due to the exceptional efforts of our sailors and officers at sea.

There are two ships that I think personify these efforts and journey of all in Navy over the last three years more than any others. HMA Ships *Success* and *Tobruk*, both deployed today: *Success* in Hawaii for the worlds largest maritime exercise – her RIMPAC deployment follows a 79 day deployment earlier this year which included 70 days at sea undertaking a key role in the search for MH370 – and *Tobruk*, after playing an important role in the Australian contribution to help the people of the Philippines in the wake of Super Typhoon Haiyan late last year, is deployed on operations in our north. I doubt anyone would have thought these achievements vaguely conceivable in 2011. On most days around just over 20% of the fleet is deployed on operations and 30-35% of the fleet would be at sea on operations or preparing for operations. We are once more a working Navy and this has only been possible because of our collective efforts.

Our operational performance is crucial but so too is the progress we have made in the development of all aspects of our culture. It has been a very challenging time and we still have much to do, but in spite this, all of our key cultural indicators are trending in the right direction. I am very proud of our work on alcohol management for example, in particular our work in successive Ocober campaigns; our indigenous outreach and the expansion of the Defence Indigenous Development Program; the work we have done in relation to Islamic outreach and education; the fact that we are the largest organisation in the country to have achieved White Ribbon accreditation as a White Ribbon workplace which is an important

step in the campaign to stop violence against women; and the proud and dignified participation of our people, regardless of sexual orientation, in the Sydney Mardi Gras.

There is a very simple reason we have done all this: it's so we can enhance the capability of the Navy by continuing to build a culture that includes, not one that excludes. We can only fight and win as a team and to do that we must respect all elements of the team; if we don't have an inclusive culture we can never reach our full potential. We have the perfect mechanism to effect this important change in New Generation Navy, a program now in its sixth year, a program which I firmly believe has changed the Navy and changed it for the better.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership of the CDF, General David Hurley, during these last three years. He has brought a cool head and great wisdom to the role. It has been a challenging time and throughout it he has provided steadfast support to me and I know to the other Chiefs. Sir, on behalf of the Navy I wish you and Linda all the best in your new role – there may even be an honorary Commodoreship in it for you but you will have to work on your salute! Likewise I would like to acknowledge the wisdom and experience that the Secretary Dennis Richardson has accumulated over many years of public service; he has willingly shared this with me and provided great support since he has been in the role.

I thank my family for their unstinting support during this time particularly when I have been absorbed in some issue or another. None of us can do what we do without the support of those close to us. I doubt though that there will be a huge reduction in the number of two thumbs up phone calls I receive in the new role.

To my two outstanding deputies over the three years, Trevor Jones and Mike Van Balen, I could not have asked for better and I thank you for your passion and dedication to the men and women of the Navy. To my office staff I thank you for your loyalty and support, as I thank Navy's senior leadership group for their efforts in making some of the significant changes we have instigated and in leading our people through them.

To Tim, I know that we have talked at length about the challenges that lie ahead and I know you are the best person to continue us down the right path. Your support in the vital role of Fleet Commander throughout most of my time as Chief has been crucial and I wish you all the very best as you take on this role as the 31<sup>st</sup> Chief of Navy.

Much has been asked of our people and their families these last three years. As always they have responded magnificently because they all understand the serious nature of the work in which we are engaged. They all understand that our nation's security and prosperity relies on the sea and in particular, on protecting our ability to trade.

And so in concluding, I want above all, to thank them, the fighting men and women of the Navy for their wonderful contribution these last few years. It is you who have regularly been called on to put the lives of others ahead of your own, it is you who must be ready to fight and win and it is you who are the soul of this great national institution – it would be a terribly dull place without you. It's been an absolute honour and privilege to lead you and to watch you go about your business and to see, on a daily basis, the amazing things you achieve.